

By the same Author :

Sold by PARKER, Oxford, and HATCHARD, Piccadilly.

A Dissertation on the Promotion of Christianity in India.
To which is prefixed, A brief historic View of the Progress of
the Gospel. Illustrated by a Chronological Chart. 4to. 15s. in
boards.

PROPOSALS

FOR PUBLISHING BY SUBSCRIPTION,

*In Two Volumes Octavo, Price One Guinea in
Boards,*

SERMONS on various Subjects. By the late Rev. JOHN
VENN, M. A. Rector of Clapham, Surrey.

Subscriptions are received, in London, by Mr. Hatchard,
Piccadilly ; to whom those who wish to encourage the under-
taking, are requested to send their names, and at the same time
to signify the number they mean to take. Subscriptions are
also received by Messrs. Rivington, St. Paul's Church Yard.

2

A PREFERENCE FOR A SECT, NOT INCONSISTENT WITH
THE MOST ARDENT ATTACHMENT TO THE WHOLE
CHURCH OF CHRIST, IN ALL THE DENOMINATIONS
INTO WHICH IT IS AT PRESENT DIVIDED.

A SERMON,

IN WHICH,

BY AN APPEAL TO FACTS,

The Baptists

Are Vindicated from the Charge of Sectarianism;

PREACHED

AT EAGLE STREET MEETING, LONDON,

NOVEMBER 24, 1822.

BY JOSEPH IVIMEY. R

"But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call
[a sect, or] heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, *believing all things
which are written in the law and in the prophets.*"

PAUL.

"What is more unjust than for men to hate what they are ignorant of?
First, let the merits of a cause be known, and then let sentence be pro-
nounced."

TERTUL. APOL. c. 1.

London:

PRINTED FOR JOHN OFFOR, 44, NEWGATE STREET.

1822.

A PRESENTATION FOR A NEW, AND IMPROVED METHOD
OF THE MOST EFFECTUAL ATTACHMENT TO THE VARIOUS
CHURCH OF GREAT BRITAIN, IN ALL THE DISSEMINATION
OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

A SERMON

BY AN APPEAL TO FACTS,

THE HONOURABLE



AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON.

BY JOSEPH IVIMEY.

THE AUTHOR'S ADDRESS IS
10, NEW BOND STREET, LONDON, W.
AND HE MAY BE CONSULTED AT
THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, W.
ON MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, AND FRIDAYS,
FROM 10 O'CLOCK TO 4 O'CLOCK.

J. Meseder, Printer,
24, Little Russell Street, Bloomsbury.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The choice of this subject was suggested by an article which appeared in the "Eclectic Review" for October last, page 123; in which the Baptists are charged with being "the most sectarian of sects—the most fortified and intrenched within the narrow circle of their own communion." To defend them from these unfounded and unjust charges has been attempted, by an avowal of their distinguishing principles and practice as to the communion of their churches, and by a statement of facts, both which prove, that they have always united their energies to promote the gospel in union with every other sect of christians, except when they have been required, by so doing, to act in opposition to what they consider as the authority of Christ, the practice of the apostles, and the discipline of the primitive churches. The writer has appended documents of the most unexceptional kind to show, that among the ancient Waldensian christians, there existed both churches and eminent ministers, who held and maintained the peculiarities of the English Baptists.

HARPUR STREET,

Dec. 16, 1822.

AGREEMENT
OF
WALDENSIAN CHURCHES,
WITH THE
English Baptists,
RESPECTING
BAPTISM AND THE TERMS OF COMMUNION.

Extracted from Morland's History of the Evangelical Churches
in the Vallies of Piedmont.

"We believe, that in the sacrament of Baptism, water is the visible and external sign, which represents to us that which (by the invisible virtue of God operating) is within us: namely, the renovation of the spirit, and the mortification of our members in Jesus Christ; *by which also we are received into the holy congregation of the people of God, there protesting and declaring openly our faith and amendment of life.*"—p. 38, Ancient Confession of Faith, without date.

"We believe, that God has ordained the sacrament of baptism to be a testimony of our adoption, and of our *being cleansed from our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, and renewed in holiness of life.*"—p. 67, Confession of 1655.

Morland reckons *Peter de Bruis* among the Waldensian ministers, of whom, and his disciple Henry, *Cassander*, a popish writer, says, "Which hereticks first openly condemned infant-baptism, and stiffly asserted that baptism was fit only for the adult, which they both verbally taught, and really practised in their administration of baptism."—*Stennett's Answer to Russen*, p. 83.

The Rev. Dr. Wall, in his History of infant baptism, considers "*Peter Bruis*, and Henry, to be the first Anti-pædobaptist preachers that ever set up a church or society of men, holding that opinion against infant baptism, and *re-baptizing such as had been baptized in infancy.*"—chap. vii. p. 404. quarto, second edition.

A SERMON,

8c. 8c.

Acts xxviii. 22.—BUT WE DESIRE TO HEAR OF THEE WHAT THOU THINKEST: FOR AS CONCERNING THIS SECT, WE KNOW THAT EVERY WHERE IT IS SPOKEN AGAINST.

IT was not till seven years after the ascension of the Saviour, and the baptism of the apostles on the day of Pentecost by the power of the Holy Ghost—the predicted pledge of the Lord Jesus having received all power both in heaven and in earth—that his followers were distinguished by any particular name:—*the disciples were called CHRISTIANS first at Antioch.* Acts xi. 26.

Antioch was the capital of Syria, and the church there was composed both of converted Jews and believing Gentiles. It does not appear whether the name “christian” was given them by the enemies of the Gospel contemptuously, or by its friends respectfully. If the former, we know they would feel happy in being thus reproached for the *name* of Christ; and if the latter, there was nothing in which they so much gloried as Christ, and him crucified. How-

ever it was, the designation of "christian" was admirably adapted to signify their relation to the Saviour, their willing subjection to his authority, their obligations to his sovereign love, and their expectations from the exceeding riches of his grace.

By this title, the followers of Jesus Christ were known amongst both Jews and Gentiles, and endured great persecutions from both:—like their divine master, they were despised and rejected of men, and were treated with the utmost indignity and contempt.

The direct opposition of the purity of the christian morality to the corruption of the Pagans, was doubtless a principal cause of the public aversion discovered by the Gentiles. *PLINY the younger*, who was governor of *PONTUS* and *BITHYNIA* between the years 103 and 105, wrote the following letter to the Emperor *TRAJAN*, in which he gives a very particular account of the christians in that province.*

"It is a rule, Sir, which I inviolably observe, to refer myself to you in all my doubts; for who is more capable of removing my scruples, or informing my ignorance? Having never been present at any trials concerning those who profess christianity, I am unacquainted, not only with the nature of their crimes, or the measure of their punishment, but how far it is proper to enter

* Letter xcvi.

into an examination concerning them. Whether, therefore, any difference is usually made with respect to the ages of the guilty, or no distinction is to be observed between the young and the adult: whether repentance entitles them to a pardon; or if a man has been once a christian, it avails nothing to desist from his error: whether the very profession of christianity, unattended with any criminal act, or only the crimes themselves, inherent in the profession, are punishable: in all these points I am greatly doubtful. In the mean while, the method I have observed towards those who have been brought before me as christians, is this:—I have interrogated them whether they were christians; If they have confessed, I have repeated the questions twice, adding threats at the same time; and, if they have still persevered, I have ordered them to be immediately punished: being persuaded, that whatever the nature of their opinions might be, a contumacy and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved correction. There have been others also brought before me, possessed of the same infatuation, but being citizens of Rome, I have directed them to be carried thither. But this crime spreading (as is usually the case) while it was actually under prosecution, several instances of the same nature occurred. An information was presented to me without any name subscribed, containing a charge against several persons, who, upon examination, denied they were christians, or ever had been so. They

repeated, after me, an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and frankincense before your statue, (which, for that purpose, I had ordered to be brought, together with those of the gods,) and even reviled the name of Christ: whereas there is no forcing, it is said, those who are really christians, into a compliance with any of these articles: I thought, therefore, proper to discharge them. Some among those who were accused by a witness in person, at first confessed themselves christians, but immediately after, denied it; while the rest answered, indeed, that they had been of that number formerly, but had now (some about three, others more, and a few about twenty years ago) forsaken that error. They all worshipped your statue, and the images of the gods; throwing out imprecations, at the same time, against the name of Christ. They affirmed the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they met on a certain stated day, before it was light, and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ, as to a god, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purposes of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up:—After which, it was their custom to separate, and then re-assemble, to eat, in common, a harmless meal. From this custom, however, they desisted after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I

forbade the meeting of any assemblies. After receiving this account, I judged it so much the more necessary to endeavour to extort the real truth, by putting two female slaves to the torture, who were said to administer* in their religious functions; but I could discover nothing more than an absurd and excessive superstition. I thought proper, therefore, to adjourn all further proceedings in this affair, in order to consult with you. For it appears to be a matter highly deserving your consideration; more especially as great numbers must be involved in the danger of these prosecutions, this inquiry having already extended, and being still likely to extend, to persons of all ranks and ages, and even of both sexes. For this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread its infection among the country villages; nevertheless, it still seems possible to remedy this evil, and restrain its progress. The temples, at least, which were almost deserted, begin now to be frequented; and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are again revived, which for some time past have met with but few purchasers. From hence it is easy to imagine what

* "These women, it is supposed, exercised the same office as Phœbe, mentioned by St. Paul, whom he stiles deaconess of the church of Cenchrea. Their business was to attend the poor and sick, and other charitable offices; as also to assist at the ceremony of female baptism, for the more decent performance of that rite: as Vossius observes upon this passage."

numbers might be reclaimed from this error, if a pardon were granted to those who shall repent." *

To this letter TRAJAN replied :—

"The method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in the proceedings against those christians who were brought before you, is extremely proper; as it is not possible to lay down any fixed plan by which to act in all cases of this nature. But I would not have you officiously enter into any inquiries concerning them. If indeed they should be brought before you, and the crime proved, they must be punished;† with this restriction, however, that where the party denies himself to be a christian, and shall make it evident that he is not, by invoking our gods, let him (notwithstanding any former suspicion) be pardoned upon his repentance. Informations without the accuser's name subscribed, ought not to be received in prosecutions of any sort, as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and

* "This letter is esteemed as almost the only genuine monument of ecclesiastical antiquity, relating to the times immediately succeeding the apostles, it being written, at most, not above forty years after the death of Paul. It was preserved by the christians themselves, as a clear and unsuspicious evidence of the purity of their doctrines; and it is frequently appealed to by the early writers of the church, against the calumnies of adversaries."

† Tertullian says, Apol. c. 3. "All inquiry into the merits of the case is omitted; the name only is attacked, the name only consigns to condemnation."

by no means agreeable to the equity of my government."

One cannot help remarking, what a literal comment these letters are upon the language of the apostle PETER; "*If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy body in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on that behalf.*" 1 Pet. iv. 14.—16.*

* The Roman deputy of Achaia, GALLIO, who has been very unjustly reproached for his carelessness and indifference respecting the gospel of Christ, acted upon principles entirely different from those of PLINY. When Paul was accused to him by the Jews, as "persuading men to worship God contrary to the law," he discovered and decided instantly, that "a question of *words*, and *names*, and of their ceremonial *law*" was a matter not within his province as a magistrate, which was confined to "matters of wrong and wicked lewdness." Acts xvii. 12—17. So also the "town clerk of Ephesus," when "Demetrius and the crafts-men" charged Paul with saying, that "they were no gods which were made with hands," answered the accusers by saying, that as there was no charge against Paul and his companions of "being robbers of churches, or blasphemers of their goddess," there was no just "cause" for such tumultuous proceedings; and if there were any "other matters," or matters of a different kind from those from mere opinions, opposed to the religion of the state, and the propagation of these without revilings and reproaches against the established order of things in Ephesus, "they should be determined in a lawful assembly." Acts xix. 21—44. I venerate the characters of these wise and intrepid magistrates. Their conduct set a lesson to the world,

It is affecting to perceive, that governors of Roman provinces, and even an emperor of Rome, should, upon such charges, have commanded the christians to be "taken away to the lions." It should be recollected, however, that their worshipping Christ as God, was contrary to one of the most ancient laws of the Roman empire, which expressly forbade the acknowledging of any God which had not been approved by the senate.*

It is probable too, that much of their opposition to the christians, arose from the violent and clamorous charges made against them by the Jews. There is a specimen of this in their

both pagan and christian. Had all magistrates understood and acted upon those principles, the liberty, property, and lives of millions, who have suffered for religious opinions, would have been spared. It was not till nearly *seventeen centuries* of the christian period had passed away, that the British government learned to act upon the maxims of GALLIO; nor was it till divine providence brought the HOUSE of HANOVER to the Throne, that civil and religious liberty was established, and the rights of conscience recognized and protected.

* It is said by Eusebius, Orosius, Tertullian, and Justin Martyr, that A. D. 34, Pontius Pilate acquainted *Tiberius* with "the Resurrection of Jesus Christ;" and that "on this account he was now, by many, believed to be a God." The emperor proposed to the senate, and recommended the measure, *that Christ might be enrolled among the gods*. This was rejected upon the pretence that they had not first approved of the matter. The opinion, however, of the emperor was not to be shaken, so that he threatened all the accusers of the christians with death. This accounts for the spread of christianity in the Roman empire during the period of his reign.—Echard's Eccles: Hist: Cent: i. 231.

accusation of PAUL before FELIX:—" *We have found this man,*" said Tertullus, "*a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the SECT OF THE NAZARENES.* Acts xxiv. 5.

There is a circumstance mentioned by *Justin Martyr*, *Origen*, and *Eusebius*, which may account for this contemptuous designation of the christians, as the *sect of the Nazarenes*. They say, that "the Jews at Jerusalem sent chosen men of the most distinguished character all over the world, representing the christians as an *atheistical* SECT, and charging them with the grossest calumnies which the ignorant Heathen had advanced against them."* It is highly probable that these calumnies † had reached Rome before the apostle had arrived there, and on that account, the chief of the Jews, having heard nothing injurious to his character, wished to know the history of the *sect* or *heresy*, of which he was so distinguished a defender, and so public a leader.

The apostle had on a former occasion avowed, that *after the way which the Jews called heresy, he worshipped the God of his fathers*. So on this occasion, he declares that he had been

* Doddridge's Family Expositor, vol. iii. Sect. 60. p. 398.

† "We are charged with murdering and eating our children at the sacrament, and we are represented as incestuous," &c. Tertul. Apol. c. 7.

bound with a chain, because of his **CHRISTIAN principles**; and consequently, that he belonged to the body of people known by that name; but then he proved to the satisfaction of some, even of the Jews, that his peculiar principles "concerning Jesus", and "the kingdom of God," accorded strictly with *what* was contained in "the law" of Moses, and the predictions "of the prophets:" and therefore he considered it as a reproach for the christian faith to be called *heresy*, and the christian church a *sect*. He evidently intimates that, had the Jews acted consistently with their own received principles, christians would not have been considered as a sect, but as the whole body of the church of God; and that, therefore, what they intended as a reproach upon christians, only reflected disgrace upon themselves, for not having made themselves acquainted with the arguments upon which their principles were founded, and searched their own scriptures to see whether the things believed by them were so or not. Dr. Doddridge has expressed himself so well upon this subject, that I cordially subscribe to his statement:—"Justly did Paul dare to avow his serving God according to *the purity of gospel institutions*, by whomsoever it might be called *heresy*; nor need any fear that charge, who make *scripture the standard of their faith*, and, in the sincerity of their hearts, seek inward divine teachings, that they may understand the divine sense of it; taking

care not *to run before their guide*, and with this inspired servant of Christ, making it their daily exercise to maintain in the whole of their conversation, a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men."

Agreeable to this statement is the proposition I shall now endeavour to prove, viz. THAT A PREFERENCE FOR A SECT, IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE MOST ARDENT ATTACHMENT TO THE WHOLE CHURCH OF CHRIST, IN ALL THE DENOMINATIONS INTO WHICH IT IS AT PRESENT DIVIDED.

The Baptists compose one of these sects, being united as a party of people professing particular tenets. I hope, however, they do this not from party zeal, or the desire of singularity, but from a regard "to the purity of Gospel institutions," and because they are resolved to make "the scriptures" only "the standard of their faith." I trust it will be easy to prove, that they have not "run without their guide," respecting any of their distinguishing sentiments. If this be really the case, they need not fear the charge of *heresy* or *schism*, while they have "a conscience void of offence towards God," and while there is nothing in their conduct that can justly offend their fellow-men, or fellow-christians. Still, however, there can be no objection to give information to any serious inquirer respecting

our peculiar opinions, and what are our reasons for preferring the Baptist denomination to any other sect or party of christians. I say, our *peculiar opinions*, for in every doctrine of christianity, we are perfectly agreed with all the reformed national churches, and with all orthodox and evangelical christians.

Our principles as Baptists are thus defined in our "Confession of Faith." * 1. "Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; † of his repentance of sin; ‡ and of his giving himself up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life. § 2. Those who do actually profess repentance || towards God, and faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance. 3. The outward element to be used** is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. 4. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance."

* First printed in 1677, and adopted by the General Assembly in London in 1688. Sold by OFFOR, Newgate Street, price 1s.

† Rom. vi. 3—5. Col. ii. 12. Gal. iii. 17. ‡ Mark xvi. 16. § Acts viii. 36—38. || Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, with Acts viii. 38.

** Matt. iii. 16. John iii. 23.

We believe this to be a correct statement of the meaning of the scriptures, and that to baptize believers upon a credible profession of their repentance and faith, and those only, is according to the purity of gospel institutions, and to the revealed will of Jesus Christ the great head and lawgiver in his Church. It is impossible then, that we can consider *infants* to be proper subjects of this ordinance, because they are necessarily destitute of the required qualifications, and incapable of enjoying the blessings connected with these spiritual dispositions. Believers have fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection, and are engrafted into him when they are baptized in his name, on a profession of their repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. To admit any to christian baptism then, except persons thus qualified, is to change the ordinance, and to nullify the institution of Christ; and by regarding the traditions of men, to make the commandment of God of none effect.

As we believe too that immersion, or dipping in water, is necessary to the due administration of the ordinance, it is impossible we can admit that *sprinkling*, a rite of which the New Testament says nothing, and which can plead no authority but what is human,* can be the institution of

* The Roman Catholics found this practice not upon the scriptures, but the traditions of the church. "Whether it [baptism] should^{sq} be administered to infants or not, can only be

Christ. We consider that there is as much authority for the absurd popish practice of baptizing bells, as there is for that of our opponents sprinkling either adults or infants; because, as it does not conform to the scripture pattern, it is a mere nonentity,—a corruption of christianity; and we consider those who practise it, as “running before their guide”, since they deviate from the scriptures as the only standard of faith and practice.

It is impossible, then, for us to follow them, without renouncing our allegiance to the Lord Jesus, our only Master and Lord. Ought we not rather to submit to be charged with heresy, than thus to violate the principles of truth and conscience? In the present state of the christian world we are compelled to appear as a sect or party, for reasons similar to, and supported by the same arguments as, the separation of the church of England from the church of Rome; and that of the Presbyterians, Independents, Quakers, and Methodists, from the church of England. It is not from the love of party, but the love of the truth; not from any inclination to oppose the established order of things, but because we are constrained to serve God rather than men; not

ascertained by the constant tradition and practice of the church from the beginning, which received from the apostles, and has transmitted to posterity, what the apostles received from Christ.”
 Rev. Dr. Poynter, Vicar Apostolic of the London District,
 Laity's Directory for 1823.

to form the character which Bacon* describes as that of a sectary, namely, "one who divides some public establishment, and joins with those distinguished by some particular whims;" but for the purpose of following the guidance and direction of the Lord Jesus, the only head of the church, by "observing all things whatsoever he hath commanded us;" and refusing to receive or obey any sentiment or rite enjoined by mere human authority, whether of councils, consistories, convocations, general assemblies, or provincial synods. I feel no hesitation in expressing my opinion, that, during the time of the apostles, those who believed and practised as we do, respecting christian baptism, were not a *sect*, but the whole body of believers; having *one Lord, one faith, ONE BAPTISM*. It was the introduction of anti-christian corruptions that first disturbed, and which still prevents the unity of the church, and which "rent the seamless coat of the Lord Jesus!" While then we are compelled to protest against the corruptions of christianity, we find it necessary to denounce infant-sprinkling as one of those corruptions. We adopt fully the golden maxim of Wickliff, "Every thing in religion not taught in the scriptures, is superfluous and wicked."

There is another part of our discipline as

* See Johnson's Dictionary, word "Sectary."

Baptists, which has exposed us to much contumely and reproach; and this, not on account of our opinion being peculiar upon the subject, (for most other churches agree with us in the principle,) but for our having rigidly adhered to our principles, by following them up in our practice. It will be easily conjectured, that I allude to what has been, in modern times, designated **STRICT COMMUNION**. This practice of not admitting to church fellowship, and to the Lord's table, those who have not been previously baptized, (according to our sentiments of the meaning of that term,) has been called bigotry; and we have been charged with "punishing," "persecuting," and "beating our fellow servants," saying, "stand by thyself, I am holier than thou," &c. &c. To all these charges I should calmly reply, *How forcible are RIGHT words, but what does your arguing reprove?* If indeed it can be proved that baptism is one of those indifferent things, like "meats and drinks," which make no part of "the righteousness of the kingdom of God;" or if it can be proved, (which I apprehend remains to be done) that "the terms of communion are of the same extent as the terms of salvation"; or, in other words, that the same things which prove a person to be a believer in Christ, give him a right to be admitted immediately to the Lord's table, then those who refuse to allow the validity of his claim, cannot be shielded from the charge of bigotry, and of

being destitute of christian charity:— because such conduct would be to “run before their guide,” and to make their own opinions, and not the scriptures of truth, the rule of their conduct. But if it is the declared will of Christ, that all his disciples should be baptized as the first public expression of their homage to him as King in Zion; and if it should be found that there is an instituted connexion between the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper, then baptism is an indispensable pre-requisite to fellowship in his Church, and consequently to participation in the ordinance of the Lord’s supper: and *what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.* Admitting the correctness of this statement, the case is entirely altered, and it is as much our duty to protest against the admission of unbaptized persons to the Lord’s table, as it is against the validity of what they call their Infant Baptism. This is not a question of expediency, but of law! The appeal must not be to our feelings, or inclinations, but to the will of Christ, as found in the New Testament; and the scriptures only must be allowed to pronounce the verdict. As “every one of us must give an account of himself to God,” then surely it ought to be left to every one’s conscience to act according as he understands the meaning of the scriptures. Let our conduct in this matter be proved to be unscriptural, and I will admit it to be *sectarian*; but if it be according to the prac-

tice of the apostles, and the discipline of the churches while under their immediate inspection, which is not attempted to be disproved, then I will submit to the charge of *bigotry*, and any thing else, rather than consent to wound my conscience, and thus to sin against Christ.

The principal reasons for our practice in this respect, are,—1. That the commission of our Lord to his apostles is so worded as clearly to intimate, that persons should be baptized before they observed the other things which he had commanded; among which, to commemorate his death was certainly included.* 2. That the practice of the apostles agreed exactly with this view of the commission: they first baptized persons, and then these persons *continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*† 3. There is also every reason to believe, that the first churches consisted of baptized believers only, and consequently that none but such were admitted to the Lord's table; an ordinance to be observed by those only who were united in church-fellowship. How else can we account for such addresses as the following?—" *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death. Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?*

* Matt. xxviii. 18—2 . † Acts ii. 37—42.

For as many of us as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."* 4. The inspired allusions to the ordinances of the gospel,—baptism, and the Lord's supper,—always suppose them to have been administered in that order:—As when the apostle says, *And were all baptized of Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink.*† 5. The analogy between circumcision and the passover under the old covenant, and baptism and the Lord's supper under the new, corroborates this idea. For as none but persons who had been previously circumcised, the outward sign of regeneration *then*, could orderly attend the feast of the pass-over,‡ so none but persons who have been baptized, the outward sign of regeneration now, can be admitted, with a due regard to scriptural order, to the Lord's supper, the representation of *Christ our passover* having been *sacrificed for us*. And lastly, as these ordinances are *positive institutions* of the gospel, owing all their authority to the declared will of Christ, by whom they are enjoined, we are not at liberty to *dispense* with their observance, nor to alter the manner in which they are to be obeyed. We are subjects and not legislators; we are to obey the laws as we find them, and not to re-model or alter them,

* Rom. vi. 3, 4. 1 Cor. i. 13. Gal. iii. 27.

† 1 Cor. x. 2—4. ‡ Exod. xii. 18. Joshua v. 7—11.

in order that they may be better accommodated to meet the errors or caprices of our fellow christians, or that we ourselves may escape the offence of the cross. The practice of mixed communion annihilates the authority of one of the institutions of the Saviour, and paves the way for its final rejection. It can only be supported on the supposition that obedience to a standing institution of universal obligation on christians, and of permanent authority, is of no practical consequence, but *stands in the way* of christian duty.

We are, on these accounts, satisfied that the conduct of those Baptist churches which require baptism as a term of communion, is scriptural, and therefore proper. The charge, then, even of *their* being "sectarian, and the most sectarian of sects" is supported by no evidence, and falls like the spent ball upon the ground, which, whatever dust it may raise about us, is not capable of doing us any injury, or of fixing any disgraceful mark upon our principles.*

* Dr. Stillingfleet, in his "Origines Sacra," Book iii. ch. 3. p. 480, speaking of "Positive Institutions", says, "The ground of obedience is not to be fetched from the nature of the thing required, but from the authority of the legislator. Hath not a legislator power to require any thing, but what he satisfies every one of his reason in commanding it? if so, what becomes of obedience and subjection?" He mentions several observations of Plutarch, in confirmation of this sentiment; among others, "Neither have human laws always apparent reason for them, nay, some of them are to appearance ridiculous." In proof of this, is produced an instance of a law of the Lacedemonian

Thus have I set before you our distinguishing principles and practice. These, I consider, we are bound by every lawful means to defend and propagate, in order that the Baptist denomination may be increased and perpetuated for the truth's sake, and the ordinances of Christ kept as they were at first delivered to the apostolic churches; and that so we may follow them even as they followed Christ.*

In order to this, every thing will depend, next to the special influence of the Holy Spirit, upon the discipline maintained in our churches; the purity of sentiment and of conduct discovered by those persons who compose them; and the evangelical sentiments, the ardent zeal, and the spiritual gifts of those who are called to the pastoral office in them.

The two former of these need not now be enlarged upon; because the peculiar occasion of this discourse requires me to confine your attention to the character and talents of candidates for the christian ministry, and to the adaptation of

ephoræ, which enjoined that "*every magistrate, at the entrance of his office, should shave himself;*" assigning only this reason for it, "*that they might learn to obey laws themselves.*" The disciples of Christ are required, at the entrance upon their profession, to be baptized: and their submitting to the rite, out of respect merely to the will of Christ, affords the best pledge that can be given of their being desirous to "*observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded them.*"

1 Cor. xi. 1, 2.

academical institutions * to improve their gifts, and to form a character essential to the full discharge of the pastoral office in our churches, so as to edify those who have believed through grace, and that others may be daily added unto them of such as shall be saved.

You will observe, that the academical instruction which our institutions are designed to promote, is confined to young men who have been judged to be pious, and to possess promising gifts for the ministry, by the respective churches of which they are members. It is not for training men up to the ministry as a profession, but to assist, by the help of evangelical and able tutors, those who have been encouraged to devote themselves to the ministry, because they have received from the Lord Jesus gifts for edification. It is not so much to make them *scholars*, as to form them to be acceptable *preachers*. There are none of you who would like that your ministers should, by their illiteracy, become the ridicule of your sons and daughters who have just returned home from a boarding school. You would not like to receive a letter from any one of them, full of bad spelling and grammatical inaccuracies. You would blush at the thought, that the Ministers of our Churches should have less education than our Sunday School

* This Sermon was preached in aid of the Baptist Academical Institution at Stepney.

Children. But how shall this be prevented, without the means of academical instruction? Shall godly young men, whom the Holy Spirit has endowed richly with gifts for edifying the body of Christ, be constantly impeded in their usefulness, and exposed to every mortification from insolent rudeness, merely for want of such information as would have set them in the best way of acquiring useful literary instruction, and of so arranging their ideas, and expressing their sentiments, as to be acceptable to the churches, and attractive to the men of the world. I am persuaded you will instantly perceive, that there is nothing in this plan that derogates from the honour of the Holy Spirit, in qualifying men for the sacred office. It is surely *scriptural* for men to “stir up the gift of God which is in them”, and *rational* to use every suitable means to improve their talents, by enlarging their understanding in every kind of useful knowledge.

The usefulness of these institutions might be proved by an appeal to facts. None can doubt, I think, that many humble and pious ministers have been much improved, and rendered more useful, by the instructions they have received through them. I know it has been said, that there have been, and are, ministers who never received academical instructions, who yet have been both acceptable and useful. This I am not disposed to controvert, nor will those who are the

most zealous in supporting such institutions contend that academical learning is absolutely *necessary*. All that is contended for, is, that it is *expedient* and *desirable* that such means should be provided, for the purpose of enabling ministers to obtain learning in the most advantageous manner, and at a time of life when they are, in general, free from those cares and anxieties which have made the acquisition of learning, at subsequent periods, very painful and difficult. That cases have occurred of vain men having been rendered more vain by their having received a little learning, is I fear too true; but the value of any means is not to be judged of from the conduct and spirit of those who, instead of using them, have abused them. If these institutions are *adapted* for usefulness, it is a sufficient reason why they should be supported and encouraged.

These views of the nature and design of the institution are stated, and ably enforced, in the prospectus, written by the Rev. Robert Hall, at the commencement of the institution in 1811. The following is an extract:—

“An unconverted ministry we look upon as the greatest calamity that can befall the church; nor would we be supposed to insinuate, by the preceding observations, that education can ever be a proper substitute for native talent, much less for real piety: all we mean to assert is, that the union of both will much enlarge the capacity of doing good. Without descending to particulars,

we must be allowed to remark, for example, that the art of arranging ideas in their proper order, and of investigating the nature of different sorts of evidence, as well as an acquaintance with the fundamental rules of composition and rhetoric, is of essential service to a public speaker.

“The existing state of society supplies additional reasons for extending the advantages of academical education. If former periods have given birth to more renowned scholars, none ever produced so many men of reading and reflection as the present; never was there a time when books were so multiplied, knowledge so diffused, and when, consequently, the exercise of cultivated talents in all departments was in such demand. When the general level of mental improvement is so much raised, it becomes necessary for the teachers of religion to possess their full share of these advantages, if they would secure from neglect the exercise of a function the most important to the interests of mankind. If in the days of inspiration there were schools of the prophets, and miraculous effusions of wisdom did not supersede human means of instruction; much less are they to be neglected in the present times, when no such communications are expected. To this we must add, that perverted literature is one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of the enemies of divine truth, who leave no effort untried to recommend their cause by the lustre of superior acquisitions,

and to form in the public mind the dangerous association between irreligion and talents, weakness and piety.

“ In insisting strongly on the advantages of a regular education, we mean no disrespect to those excellent persons who have exercised their ministry, much to the benefit of the church, without those advantages; many of whom are men of vigorous minds, who have surmounted great obstacles in the pursuit of knowledge; and others by their piety and good sense well fitted for the stations which they occupy. We trust that such ministers will always be highly esteemed in our churches: there are situations, it is probable, which they are better qualified to fill, than persons of a higher education. To the improvement of the higher classes, however, it will scarcely be denied, men of the latter character are best suited; and as their salvation is not in itself less important than that of the lower orders, so their superior weight in society attaches to their character and conduct peculiar consideration. It is also manifest, from the examples of a Brainerd, an Elliot, and a Schwartz, that where piety in a candidate for the ministry is once secured, a course of academical studies is no impediment to the growth and developement of qualities the most conducive to success,—deep humility, eminent spirituality, unshaken perseverance, and patient self-denial.

“ With respect to the principles we wish to

see prevail in our future seminary, it may be sufficient to observe, that they are in general the principles of the Reformation; and were we to descend to a more minute specification, we should add, they are the principles which distinguish the body of christians denominated Particular, or Calvinistic Baptists. While we feel a cordial esteem for all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, disclaiming all pretensions to that vaunted liberality which masks an indifference to revealed truth, we feel no hesitation in declaring that nothing would give us more concern, than to see the seminary we have in contemplation become the organ of infidel or heretical pravity."

Considerations like these led the late Mr. William Taylor, of Newgate-street, to devote in his life-time £3600. towards the purchase of the extensive premises at Stepney, and £1000. towards its permanent support; by which he raised a lasting monument to his wisdom, piety, and liberality, and laid the foundation for the superstructure of the Baptist Academical Institution that has since been raised upon it.* And was

* "We conceive some advantages" says Mr. Hall, "may accrue from fixing the proposed seminary in the vicinity of the metropolis. It may be hoped that its pecuniary resources will be benefitted, by its being placed in the centre of commercial opulence; that a residence of a few years near the capital of a great empire may give an expansion to the youthful mind, and that the means which it affords of obtaining the assistance of teachers in various departments of science, no where else to be found, may improve the taste, and direct the exertions, of the students."

it wrong that he should show this preference for the interests of his own denomination? Did he not rather act most consistently with his character as a deacon of a Baptist church? It is mentioned to the honour of Timothy, that "he naturally cared" for the state of the church at Philippi. This peculiar affection arose probably from his having been in company with Paul when the gospel was first preached there, and having contributed towards the establishment of that church. Is it not natural that our first attention should be given to that denomination with which we are most closely allied by sentiment and connexion? In repairing the walls of Jerusalem, the people worked "over against their own house": and the priests repaired "every one over against his house"; and by these united labours, the whole wall was repaired, and the city of Jerusalem was defended.*

Having shown you that it is lawful and necessary that we should encourage and support our academical institutions, I am now to prove, that this preference for our own denomination, is not inconsistent with the most ardent attachment to

* Most cordially do I unite with Mr. Hall, in recommending the Academical Institution at Stepney "to the patronage of the public, and to the blessing of God; and in expressing a hope, that, through the influence of the Divine Spirit, in a copious effusion on the future patrons, tutors and students of this seminary, however small in its beginning, it will become respectable for learning and piety, and be a nursery of faithful and able ministers, and a blessing to the church of Christ."

the whole church of Christ; and I am happy I can do so, by an appeal to facts, which make a part of the Baptist history.

It is notorious that the Baptists, so early as the year 1615, in pleading for that inalienable birth-right, liberty of conscience, and in exposing the wickedness of persecution, did it upon *general* principles; not seeking liberty for themselves alone, but for all christians. This was many years before either MILTON, or OWEN, or LOCKE had written in defence of even *restricted* toleration. It ought to be universally known too, that in Rhode Island, one of the states of America, which was founded by a Baptist (Mr. Roger Williams) about 1650, *universal liberty of conscience* was secured by the charter to all its citizens; and that no instance of persecution has ever been known in that state, after the expiration of more than one hundred and eighty years.

Nor have the peculiarities of the Baptists prevented them from cordially uniting with christians of other denominations in any plan for promoting christianity, or humanity, which did not demand from them the sacrifice of their principles, or the compromise of their conscience. In proof of this may be mentioned, their union now for more than sixty years in the Widows' Fund Society, and the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor. And to come to our own times;—what is the religious

denomination of the persons who projected, and who are still united in supporting the principal institutions, namely, the Sunday School Society, the Religious Tract Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the British and Foreign School Society, the London Society for the relief of superannuated ministers, and the Port of London and Bethel Societies for the conversion of sailors? I ask, without fear of contradiction, are they not Baptists? And if our Missionary Society for India is conducted exclusively by Baptists, this has arisen from the circumstance that a union with Pædobaptists in missions to the heathens, would not be practicable: for when converted persons applied for baptism, Pædobaptists must necessarily wish their households also to be baptized; while the Baptists must as necessarily insist on the confinement of the rite to professed believers. But even in this case, every one knows, that our zeal has been employed to make the heathens not Baptists but Christians. Have not the chief labours of our missionaries, and the principal part of our funds, been directed to make the Scriptures known in all the languages and dialects of the East? a work common to christianity, and by which the labours of Missionaries of *every denomination* will be aided and greatly facilitated. The same may be said of our Society for Ireland, four-fifths of the whole income of which are expended

upon the instruction of children, and by which no religious book is used in the schools except the Scriptures. Nor is the Baptist Home Missionary Society justly chargeable with sectarian feelings. Their sending of missionaries and itinerants to towns and villages where God is not worshipped, or which are destitute of an evangelical ministry, proves that they wish rather to promote the empire of the cross than the boundaries of a denomination. *Not building upon another man's foundation, or entering into another man's line of things made ready to their hands, they are mainly anxious to labour where Christ is not preached; that to whom he was not spoken of, they may see; and they that have not heard may understand.*

If this statement bears the appearance of "boasting," it has arisen not from any inclination to speak thus "foolishly;" but the unkind taunts and insinuations of certain public writers have "compelled me." The apostle Paul, I doubt not, would have treated the aspersions thrown upon his character with dignified silence, and magnanimous indifference, had he not feared that his silence and indifference would be considered as a tacit acknowledgment of the truth of the charges unjustly exhibited against him, and thus the cause of Christ be injured. Let it be proved that the peculiarity of our opinions has prevented us, in any one instance, from

uniting with other christians in objects common to christianity, and we will submit to be branded as *schismatics* and *heretics*: but until that be done, such charges must be considered as reproachful and unjust, reflecting disgrace only on those who make them.*

Whilst, then, we feel a laudable anxiety to support societies which are peculiarly our own, and which have been formed from the circumstance that our sentiments as Dissenters and

* On submitting the proof sheet to a respected friend, he furnished me with the following note: which I have thought it right to insert:—

“ That the Baptists have been uniformly desirous of contributing their aid to every scheme tending to promote the interests of piety and benevolence, without regard to denomination, is abundantly evident. It is true, however, that attempts have been made on some occasions, to mark them as ‘troublers of Israel,’ and therefore to be guarded against. Hence we learn, that in the formation of the ‘Protestant Dissenter’s Grammar School’ at Mill Hill, it was proposed, and strenuously supported, to have no connexion with the Baptists; unless they would consent to have their children instructed, in common with others, in a form of words which they deem unscriptural; or at least, unless they would submit to have their children placed in a corner, whilst others repeated such a form of words as it was contended by high authority was *too important* to be either modified or omitted; and for relief from this grievance they were indebted to the good sense and correct feeling of their *lay* rather than their *clerical* friends: to which, however, there were some honorable exceptions.

“ In the formation too, of what is called the ‘Congregational School,’ the Baptists were indeed permitted to subscribe, although the sons of their ministers were excluded from the participation of any of its benefits. It has sometimes been thought, and probably on just grounds, that had its plan embraced a certain proportion of the sons of Baptist ministers, it would not have had

Baptists have excluded us from other public institutions, established for the education of ministers; and whilst we are solicitous to promote mainly the special interests of our own denomination: let us be upon our guard lest we should attach an undue importance to them, so as to neglect the more essential matters of religion. To be a *Baptist*, and yet not a *christian*, would be a lamentable consideration. To contribute towards those means which may affect the salvation of others, and remain in a lost condition ourselves, would be awfully distressing. To feel anxious that ministers should preach the gospel acceptably, and to be so blinded by the god of this world as not to discover our danger, nor the way to escape from the wrath to come, will be of all events the most shocking and deplorable; because, to perish under the gospel will

so much reason to complain of the paucity of its funds, which it is now *so often* appealing to the public to recruit, and which it is believed are still inadequate to its requirements.

“ In the formation also of the Society of ‘ Aged and Infirm Ministers,’ the Baptists took a prominent part; but there were persons who objected to a union with them in this benevolent design, least their ministers should claim too large a share in the distribution. But mark the result. With whatever degree of confidence it was asserted that the ministers of the Independent body did not stand in need of such a society to supply their wants, the number of applications from that class of ministers is more than equal to those from both the other denominations: yet still the Baptists, with the utmost goodwill towards them, are aiming, by every means in their power, to promote the prosperity of that society.”

be to perish under accumulated wrath and aggravated vengeance. Suffer me then to *warn every man*, to be upon his guard against such a specious imposition upon himself, as to suppose any thing can justify the neglect of his own salvation. To prevent this, the gospel *teaches every man* that *there is salvation in no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ. Repent, then, and believe the gospel. Whosoever shall call upon the name of Christ, shall be saved:* for he hath said, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* O that God may give testimony to the word of his grace, that I may at last have to *present every man perfect in Christ Jesus!*

Do any feel the want of inducement to contribute towards the Society for which I now plead? I cannot persuade myself, if they are genuine believers in the Son of God, and have tasted that the Lord is gracious, that they can be indifferent respecting the preaching of the gospel, nor as to its being done in the most acceptable manner. When Paul addressed his friend and brother, PHILEMON, on a pecuniary subject, he said, *I do not say unto thee how thou owest unto me thine own self beside.* Estimate, if you can, how much you owe of your respectability and happiness, and peace and hope, to the preaching of the gospel. Surely you will be desirous of seizing an opportunity of giving a substantial proof of

gratitude to God on your own account, and of your wish that all men may hear the glorious gospel of the blessed God: nor will you forget to pray, that the Holy Spirit may render it the power of God to their salvation. By your liberality on the present occasion, you will cause many to glorify God for your professed subjection to the gospel of Christ.—Yea, brethren, let me have joy of you in the Lord, refresh my bowels in the Lord. Having confidence in your obedience, I thus address you, knowing, or at least hoping, that you will also do more than I say.*

Finally, remember that one is our master, even Christ; that glorious redeemer, God manifest in the flesh, who hath purchased the church with his own blood: and who, as the proof that he had ascended on high, and led captivity captive, gave gifts unto men. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about

* Phil. 19, 20